



The Census Project

April 28, 2021

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Chair
Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Ranking Member
Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Matt Cartwright
Chairman
Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt
Ranking Member
Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Shaheen, Chairman Cartwright, Ranking Member Moran, and Ranking Member Aderholt,

On behalf of The Census Project (www.thecensusproject.org), a broad-based coalition of business, civic, human services, state and local government, and academic groups committed to supporting the U.S. Census Bureau's mission to produce full, fair, complete, and accurate data, including data from the 2020 Census and American Community Survey (ACS), we are writing to express support for providing the agency with robust funding in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022.

Specifically, as you consider the FY 2022 Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Appropriations bill, we urge your subcommittees to recommend that the Census Bureau receive \$2 billion, a funding level that represents a \$335 million increase over the agency's FY 2021 total funding level of \$1.65 billion¹.

The Census Bureau is at an important crossroads: still resolving the outcome of the 2020 Census, while simultaneously pursuing groundbreaking technical innovations and preparing for the 2030 Census. In FY 2022, Congress has a unique opportunity to initiate multi-year funding for the Bureau, providing the agency with resources that it needs to not only sustain and strengthen its mission, but also to recover from years of postponed enhancements and pursue numerous necessary operational improvements.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to wreak havoc on the completion of the 2020 Census. Operations necessary to produce and disseminate the Apportionment counts,

¹ The FY 2021 figure includes a \$1.1 billion direct appropriation and carry-over funding that Congress authorized the Bureau to spend in FY 2021, if necessary, in support of 2020 Census activities.

redistricting data products, and downstream detailed census files have shifted when funding will be required to later in the decennial cycle than is typical. The Bureau has already acknowledged that delays in the release of apportionment and redistricting data are forcing the Bureau to postpone the delivery of subsequent 2020 Census data products, including the Demographic Profile, Demographic & Housing Characteristics File, Congressional District Demographic and Housing Characteristics File, and Population and Housing Tables, into FY 2022. The delay of these 2020 Census products means the Bureau will very likely need additional funding in FY 2022 to complete all operations and data delivery associated with completing all related 2020 Census operations.

Besides requiring additional funding to meet its constitutionally mandated decennial census mission, the Census Bureau needs enhanced resources to pursue other initiatives in FY 2022, including:

- **Modernizing the Bureau’s data infrastructure**--The Census Bureau needs to harness currently available Big Data technology and methodology to reduce respondent burden and realign the Bureau's already-existing data from multiple sources into universal "frames." A significant increase in funding for the Census Frames initiative, which was only funded at about \$12.7 million in FY 2021, will allow the Census Bureau to reduce duplication, increase ease and usability of federal statistical data, enhance the quality of Bureau products, facilitate analysis of the U.S. population and economy, and ensure that the federal government can utilize administrative data, responsibly and appropriately, to maximum advantage before burdening survey respondents.
- **Enhancing the American Community Survey (ACS)**—As part of the overall Frames Initiative, the Census Bureau needs the flexibility to combine data sources with the ACS, the ongoing survey that replaced the “long form” of the Census in 2005 which provides consistent, timely and accurate data about the nation’s changing socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, to produce more timely granular data for a significant number of geographies (e.g. rural and remote regions) and sub-populations (e.g. American Indians and Alaska Natives) than achievable from the current ACS 5-year estimates. ACS data are an invaluable resource that data users, state and local governments, planners, and businesses rely on throughout the decade to make key investment and policy decisions as well as to conduct research and evaluate programs. The Bureau also needs to continue to use the ACS “as a testbed for innovative survey and data processing techniques,” as Congress directed in FY 2021. Funding for the ACS has remained relatively stagnant in recent years, including a little over \$226 million in FY 2021. The Bureau needs additional funding (no less than \$45 million to increase the sample size by at least 1 million households) to properly plan and execute an expansion of the ACS, beginning in FY 2022.
- **Stabilizing and increasing funding for Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)**-- After multiple COVID-19 relief bills, policymakers need to understand how the individual provisions in these supplemental appropriations measures assisted (or failed to assist) families and communities. The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) is designed to achieve that goal, yet its funding has fluctuated routinely, especially

during years in which the government has been funded via a series of continuing resolutions. Stabilizing and increasing support for SIPP, to no less than \$48 million in FY 2022, will help Congress make evidence-based policy decisions on the effectiveness of government assistance programs.

- **Extending Pulse Surveys**--The Bureau's "Pulse Surveys" have provided timely data regarding the economic, social, and health effects of COVID-19 on U.S. communities and businesses. The surveys have attracted support from other federal agencies that have requested to add questions and collaborated with the Census Bureau to produce the surveys. The Census Bureau needs no less than \$6 million in FY 2022 to sustain and expand this innovation that provides much more timely data on current economic and social issues.
- **Launching the Economic Census**--The Economic Census of 2022 is rapidly approaching and may be even more vital than normal as the nation seeks to understand and recover from the current economic crisis. Year "2" usually brings increased spending on the Economic Census. For example, in FY 2012, the Bureau proposed spending an additional \$12.6 million (an 11 percent increase over FY 2011) to support that phase of the 2012 Economic Census. Increased spending for the 2022 Economic Census is anticipated, once again, in FY 2022.

These are a just few examples of important functions and innovations that the Census Bureau could be pursuing in FY 2022 with enhanced resources. Thank you for considering the many challenges and opportunities facing the Census Bureau. We appreciate your consideration of our [request](#) and urge you to provide the Census Bureau with \$2 billion in FY 2022.

Sincerely,

National

- Academic Pediatric Association
- African American Health Alliance
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Anthropological Association
- American Pediatric Society
- American Sociological Association
- American Statistical Association
- American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC
- Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote)
- Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
- Association of Population Centers
- Association of Public Data Users (APDU)
- CensusChannel LLC
- Common Cause

Consortium of Social Science Associations
 Council for a Strong America
 Council for Community and Economic Research
 Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COPAFS)
 Insights Association
 Japanese American Citizens League
 Medicare Rights Center
 NALEO Educational Fund
 National Association for Bilingual Education
 National Association for Business Economics
 National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
 National Association of REALTORS®
 National Community Development Association
 National League of Cities
 Nielsen
 Partnership for America's Children
 Pediatric Policy Council
 Population Association of America
 ReadyNation
 Society for Pediatric Research
 The Gerontological Society of America
 The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
 U.S. Conference of Mayors
 UNITED SIKHS
 Urban and Regional Information Systems Association

State-Level

Equality California	CA
Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association	FL
Housing Action Illinois	IL
Indivisible Hawaii	HI
MACS- Minnesotans for the American Community Survey	MN
Massachusetts Census Equity Fund	MA
One Arizona	AZ
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children	PA
Public Justice Center	MD

Local/City/Regional

APA VOICE Redistricting Task Force	New York	NY
Apalachee Regional Planning Council	Tallahassee	FL
Dreams United/Sueños Unidos	Todd County	MN

Nollie Jenkins Family Center
RLS Demographics, Inc.

Durant MS
Rensselaerville NY